

NSC BRIEFING

13 January 1960

**SUPREME SOVIET**

- I. Soviet pseudo-parliament, the Supreme Soviet, convened this morning. Disarmament is the only item on the agenda, and Khrushchev has promised a unilateral reduction of Soviet armed forces by one-third during the next year or so.
- A. Khrushchev stated that about 1,200,000 men would be demobilized, leaving effective armed forces strength at 2,400,000. (K listed Sov armed strength at 3,623,000. This compares to Pentagon figures of about 4,000,000, including 2½ million in army; 787,500 in Navy; and 800,000 in air force.)
- B. Emphasizing that disarmament is not a sign of weakness, he boasted that Soviet nuclear-rocket capability was sufficient to "obliterate from the face of the earth" any attacking nation or nations. Claiming that the Soviet air force and navy have lost their former importance, he said that the air force will be replaced almost completely by rockets. There have been some hints that the armed forces will now concentrate on small task forces instead of large armies.
- C. Khrushchev claimed that the Seven Year Plan is progressing well ahead of schedule and would be over-fulfilled ahead of schedule. He promised the Soviet people shorter working hours, more money, and better housing conditions.
- D. For the future, Khrushchev said that total disarmament, conclusion of a German peace treaty, a ban on thermonuclear weapons and easing of international tensions are the most important tasks facing world diplomats.

- II. The MVD, Stalin's old secret police outfit, has been broken up by a decree of the Supreme Soviet.
- A. This will enable Khrushchev to make extravagant claims about the progressive and democratic nature of his leadership.
  - B. Actually, MVD had already lost much of its power. Its security troops will probably be transferred to the secret police organization (KGB) which Khrushchev set up in 1954. The KGB took over the MVD border troops two years ago, and these specialized units are not likely to be much affected by a general reduction in the strength of the armed forces.
- III. On the domestic political scene, Moscow announced on the/eve of the Supreme Soviet meeting that one of the top figures in the Party has been handed a sharp demotion.
- A. The Kremlin announced yesterday that Aleksey Kirichenko, a member of the Party's ruling Presidium and also of the Secretariat, has been assigned a secondary post outside Moscow.
  - B. Though less in the public eye than other Khrushchev lieutenants, Kirichenko was previously believed to be the leading contender for Khrushchev's mantle as leader of the Communist Party.
  - C. His demotion is symptomatic of the maneuvering for place of preference behind Khrushchev which is undoubtedly going on in the highest Party councils, and may indicate a new period of reshuffling at the Presidium and Secretariat levels.